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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 24 September 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement issued on 15 September 1997 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan at the International Conference on Central Asia as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, held at Tashkent on 15 and 16 September 1997 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 71.

(Signed) Alisher VOHIDOV
Permanent Representative of
Uzbekistan to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: Russian]

Statement issued at Tashkent on 15 September 1997 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

The proliferation of nuclear weapons throughout the world is the main threat to the survival of mankind. Nuclear weapons are capable of destroying not only everything that man has created over the centuries but also life on earth itself.

In the age of nuclear weapons it is necessary to develop a new idea of peace based on the principles of rejection of the use of force or the threat thereof, respect for the right of every people to make its own social, political and ideological choices rejecting policies that promote the domination of some by others.

The Tashkent International Conference on Central Asia as a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, held on 15 and 16 September 1997, recognizing the inseparability of regional and global security, reaffirmed the need for a collective contribution to the progressive development of the international community.

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, aware of their common responsibility, proceeding from their unwavering desire to work together, expressing the united view of their peoples, and having signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Almaty Declaration:

- Hereby affirm that the need to declare Central Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone is the most important consideration in strengthening regional security;

- Welcome the objective and principles set out in the documents of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons;

- Welcome the adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, which was opened for signature on 24 September 1996, and urge all States that have not yet done so to sign the Treaty;

- Express their satisfaction that States that have voluntarily assumed obligations under treaties on nuclear-weapon-free zones constitute a significant portion of the world and are creating a new culture of nuclear security;

- Consider that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is consistent with national, regional and global security interests;

- Call upon the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and all States to support the initiative for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and provide all possible assistance for its establishment;

- Call upon other States to provide assistance in rehabilitating areas, including areas contaminated by radioactive waste, considering it necessary to ensure environmental security in their region;

- Confirm their readiness to broaden and strengthen cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy;

- Appeal to the United Nations specialized agencies to establish a group of United Nations experts with the participation of a regional group of experts to consider ways and means of preparing and implementing a treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia as well as the elements of such a treaty.